

no request to testify

Smith

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Assistant Secretary John Berry
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Dear Assistant Sec. Berry,

I am providing this written testimony for you Dec.4-13 visit to Hawaii to discuss Native Hawaiian issues.

First of all, I would like to point out to you that very few Native Hawaiians are requesting any change to federal policy. Although they are few, they are vocal and always claim to represent many unseen constituents. As an example of this small number, for the election of delegates to the Native Hawaiian Convention held in 1998, only 8,000 of the 200,000 eligible Native Hawaiian voters participated.

Hawaii was, until very recently, a society composed of many races, none claiming superiority over any other. With the signing of the apology bill by President Clinton in 1993, Hawaiian activists saw this as an avenue to achieve something from the government. They aren't sure what it is they can get but they want to get it. This has created a divided society of Hawaiians (any person with 1 drop of Hawaiian blood) and all non-Hawaiians. The scent of money has divided our once melting pot community. Most people want us to return to the days when we were all equal and had Aloha for each other.

Who would receive reparations? Is a person with 1 drop of Hawaiian blood (not provable) to receive a 100% portion of reparations? And why would anyone receive reparations? Certainly the Hawaiians have had an equal opportunity to excel. Hawaiians have become Governor and a U.S. Senator, surely this proves they can achieve like any other race. Pres. Clinton said we were sorry for the overthrow, but now does reparations have to be given. Hawaiians are better off under U.S. citizenship than they ever would have been under the Hawaiian monarchy. Many Hawaiians receive all the benefits of U.S. welfare, social security, federal jobs, etc., they've never been excluded from any U.S. benefit.

Surely there must be a stop to the divisive nature of singling out one race over another. Let us go back to the Aloha we once had.

Mahalo,

Garry P. Smith